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NEWS RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

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**In Dewey Beach, It Pays to be Sober. Business First to Sign on to
State's HERO Campaign For Designated Drivers**
Rewards for the Designated Driver to be implemented Labor Day Weekend

Dewey Beach - Many people heading to Dewey Beach for the Labor Day weekend can't wait to celebrate with their favorite alcoholic drink of choice. However, at one beach business it will pay to be the person in the group who is *not* drinking alcohol. The Dewey Beach Grill has become the first Delaware restaurant to sign on as a supporter of the HERO Campaign for Designated Drivers since the Office of Highway Safety (OHS) launched the initiative last August.

Beginning Labor Day weekend, the Dewey Beach Grill will offer free soft drinks or water to the individual in a group of people who has volunteered to be the designated driver for the evening. In addition, the DBG is displaying HERO materials such as posters, stickers, and window clings as well as table tents that reference the HERO campaign on one side, and OHS's *Checkpoint Strikeforce* DUI enforcement campaign on the other.

"The HERO campaign is about rewarding responsible behavior and we applaud the Dewey Beach Grill for being the first to step up and sign on to this campaign," said Andrea Summers, Community Relations Officer for the Office of Highway Safety. "Doing so clearly demonstrates their concern for the safety of their customers and of our roadways." Summers says that the DBG's owner indicated that while many staff members currently offer free non alcoholic drinks to customers, he likes the idea of making it an official policy and being part of a formal, statewide program promoting responsibility.

The HERO Campaign was created by the family of Naval Academy graduate Ensign John Elliott who was hit head on and killed by a drunk driver in 2000, while on his way to

celebrate his mother's birthday in his home state of New Jersey. Though New Jersey became the first HERO state in the nation, Delaware quickly became the second in August of 2007, when Lt. Governor Carney signed a proclamation at a NcCo news conference in the presence of Ensign Elliott's family. Later that evening, OHS dedicated a sobriety checkpoint in Ensign Elliott's memory.

Over the past year, the Office of Highway Safety has forged a partnership with the Delaware Restaurant Association to sign businesses up for the program. The inspiration for OHS's efforts came from another local business, Dover Downs Hotel and Casino. Prior to the August 2007 launch of OHS's campaign, officials at Dover Downs who knew the Elliott family, began providing free soft drinks to Designated Drivers and displaying HERO campaign materials the Elliotts had produced. Meetings between facility managers and OHS provided a template for safety officials to start with. The Hotel and Casino managers say the program is well received by its customers.

OHS is currently reaching out to other beach businesses, and will soon begin contacting businesses in central and western Sussex County before working its way up the state. Other plans for the coming year include setting up HERO Designated Driver booths at college football games statewide where students will be asked to sign a HERO pledge card in exchange for a bottle of water. Several more states are already either signing on to the HERO Campaign, or have indicated their interest to do so in the near future. Nearby Virginia is launching a program similar to the one Delaware is implementing.

OHS will provide HERO materials including posters, coasters, table tents, window clings, DD wristbands, and server buttons free of charge to businesses interesting in implementing the program. They will receive recognition on the OHS website and through periodic publications. A HERO page will be added to the OHS website in the next two weeks. Anyone interested in learning more about Delaware's HERO Campaign for Designated Drivers can contact Andrea Summers at (302) 744-2743 or Trish Bachman, Corporate Outreach Coordinator at (302) 744-2731.

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